### Case 1:18-cv-00737-EAW Document 1 Filed 07/03/18 Page 1 of 16

# PETITION UNDER 28 U.S.C. § 2254 FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS BY A PERSON IN STATE CUSTODY

Place of Confinement  Place of Confinement  Anne of Petitioner (include name under which convicted)  Name of Petitioner (include name under which convicted)  Name of Petitioner (include name under which convicted)  Name of Bespondent (authorized person having dustobus of petitioner) 7.018  Name of Petitioner (include name under which convicted)  Name of Bespondent (authorized person having dustobus of petitioner) 7.018  Name and location of court which entered the judgment of conviction under attack  PETITION  1. Name and location of court which entered the judgment of conviction under attack  PETITION  2. Date of judgment of conviction  3. Length of sentence	Unit	ted States District Court Western District of New York
Place of Confinement  Charles and Considerated Processing Association of Particles and Considerated Processing Association of Court which convicted and Charles an	Name	There Forks Prisoner No. Cale NS CV 737
Name of Petitioner (Include name under which convicted)  Name of Petitioner (Include name under which convicted)  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycl petitloher) 3 - 2018  PETITION  1. Name and location of court which entered the judgment of conviction under attack  Now York  2. Date of judgment of conviction  3. Length of sentence   Type Assault (PL 120.000)   Suprised Mesand Person  Assault (PL 120.000)   Suprised Mesand Degree  (S) Not guilty  (b) Guilty  (c) Nolo contendere  If you entered a guilty plea to one count or indictment, and a not guilty plea to another count or indictment, give details:  6. If you pleaded not guilty, what kind of trial did you have? (Check one)  (a) Jury  (b) Judge only  1. Name and location of conviction  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitloher) - 2018  Name of Respondent (authorized person having austocycle petitlo	Place of	Confinement Confinement
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2. Date of judgment of conviction  3. Length of sentence		PEIIION
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4. Nature of offense involved (all counts) Charged with me count of Frit- Degree Assault (PL 120.10(1)) is convicted to second-Degree Assault (PL 120.05(2)):  5. What was your plea? (Check one)  (a) Not guilty □  (b) Guilty □  (c) Nolo contendere □  If you entered a guilty plea to one count or indictment, and a not guilty plea to another count or indictment, give details:  6. If you pleaded not guilty, what kind of trial did you have? (Check one)  (a) Jury □  (b) Judge only □  7. Did you testify at the trial?	2.	Date of judgment of conviction
4. Nature of offense involved (all counts) Chavaca with me count of Frst- Degree Assault (PL 120.05(2)):  5. What was your plea? (Check one)  (a) Not guilty □  (b) Guilty □  (c) Nolo contendere □  If you entered a guilty plea to one count or indictment, and a not guilty plea to another count or indictment, give details:  6. If you pleaded not guilty, what kind of trial did you have? (Check one)  (a) Jury □  (b) Judge only □  7. Did you testify at the trial?	3.	<b>1</b>
Degree Assault (PL (20.10(1))) 5 cm rided in Second Degree  Assault (PL (20.05(4))).  5. What was your plea? (Check one)  (a) Not guilty   (b) Guilty   (c) Nolo contendere   If you entered a guilty plea to one count or indictment, and a not guilty plea to another count or indictment, give details:  6. If you pleaded not guilty, what kind of trial did you have? (Check one)  (a) Jury   (b) Judge only   7. Did you testify at the trial?		
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(c) Nolo contendere  If you entered a guilty plea to one count or indictment, and a not guilty plea to another count or indictment, give details:  6. If you pleaded not guilty, what kind of trial did you have? (Check one)  (a) Jury  (b) Judge only  7. Did you testify at the trial?		(a) NOT GUILTY
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(a) Jury  (b) Judge only  7. Did you testify at the trial?		
(a) Jury  (b) Judge only  7. Did you testify at the trial?		
(a) Jury  (b) Judge only  7. Did you testify at the trial?	æ	If you pleaded not quilty what kind of trial did you have? (Chook and)
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7. Did you testify at the trial?		(b) Judge only
-		(b) sauge only
Yes 🖾 No 🗆	7.	Did you testify at the trial?
		Yes 🖾 No 🗀
8. Did you appeal from the judgment of conviction?	8.	Did you appeal from the judgment of conviction?
Yes ₪ No □		Yes 团 No □

9.	If your answer to 8. was "yes," attach a copy of the appeals court decision to this petition and answer the following:							
	(a) Name of court (e.g., NYS Sup. Court, 4th Dept.) NYS Sup. Court, First Dept.							
	(b) Result Affirmed							
	(c) Date of result and citation, if known 132 A.D.34 513 (Oct 15, 2015).							
	(d) List all grounds you raised (1) Court improperly permitted projecution to guestion Sparks about details of a prior unviction.  (2) Court improperly denied sparks's request for a justification instruction.  (3) Court improperty admitted sparks's statements to posite							
	(4) Sentence was excessive.							
10.	Did you seek further review of the appeals court decision by a higher state court (e.g., the NYSCourt of Appeals)?							
	Yes 🔼 No 🗆							
11.	If your answer to 10. was "yes," attach a copy of the higher state court decision to this petition and answer the following:							
	(a) Name of court Nys Court of Appeals							
	(b) Result Affirmed							
	(c) Date of result and citation, if known							
	(d) List all grounds you raised (1) Court improperly pamiffed prosecution							
	to grestion Un. Sparks about details of a prior conviction (2) Court suproperly denied Sparks's regrest for a							
	perfication netraction.							
	(3)							
	(4)							
12.	Did you file a petition for certiorari in the United States Supreme Court?							
	Yes D No D-							
13.	If your answer to 12. was "yes," attach a copy of the United States Supreme Court decision to this petition and please answer the following with respect to each direct appeal you asked the United States Supreme Court to review:							
	2							

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(b) Date of result and citation, if known  (c) List all grounds you raised (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  Orther than a direct appeal from the judgment of conviction and sentence, have you previously filed any petition applications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition under 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?  Yes	(a)	Result
(2)  (3)  (4)  Other than a direct appeal from the judgment of conviction and sentence, have you previously filed any petition applications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition under 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?  Yes	(b)	Date of result and citation, if known
(3)  (4)  Other than a direct appeal from the judgment of conviction and sentence, have you previously filed any petition applications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition under 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?  Yes	(c)	List <u>all</u> grounds you raised (1)
Other than a direct appeal from the judgment of conviction and sentence, have you previously filed any petition applications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition under 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?  Yes No Ellif your answer to 14. was "yes," attach a copy of that court's decision to this petition and give the following information:  (a) Name of court  (b) Nature of proceeding  (c) Date Filed  (d) List all grounds you raised (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  (e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?		(2)
Other than a direct appeal from the judgment of conviction and sentence, have you previously filed any petition applications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition under 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?  Yes \( \text{No} \) \( \tex		(3)
applications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition under 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?  Yes		(4)
If your answer to 14. was "yes," attach a copy of that court's decision to this petition and give the following information:  (a) Name of court  (b) Nature of proceeding  (c) Date Filed  (d) List all grounds you raised (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  (e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?	app	plications, or motions (e.g. a petition under NY CPL § 440, a state habeas petition, or a previous petition der 28 U.S.C. 2254) with respect to this judgment in any court, state or federal?
(b) Nature of proceeding  (c) Date Filed  (d) List all grounds you raised (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  (e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?	lf y	our answer to 14. was "yes," <u>attach a copy of that court's decision to this petition</u> and give the following
(c) Date Filed	(a)	Name of court
(d) List all grounds you raised (1)  (2)  (3)  (4)  (e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?	(b)	Nature of proceeding
(2)  (3)  (4)  (e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?	(c)	Date Filed
(4)  (e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?	(d)	List <u>all</u> grounds you raised (1)
(4)		
(e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?		
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Yes No C	(e)	Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?
		Yes D No D

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	The state of the s
	(f) Result
	(g) Date of result
16.	If your answer to 14. was "yes" and you also filed a <u>second</u> petition, application, or motion, <u>attach a copy of that</u> <u>court's decision to this petition</u> and give the same information:
	(a) Name of court
	(b) Nature of proceeding
	(c) Date Filed
	(d) List <u>all</u> grounds you raised (1)
	(3)
	(4)
	(e) Did you receive an evidentiary hearing on your petition, application, or motion?  Yes □ No □  (f) Result
	(g) Date of result  As to any third, fourth, etc. petition, application, or motion, attach a copy of that court's decision to this petition
	and give the same information asked for under 15. and 16.
17.	If your answer to 14. was "yes" and if the court did not grant the petition(s), application(s), or motion(s) you listed under 15. and 16., did you appeal to an intermediate court of appeals (e.g., the New York State Court of Appeals or the Second Circuit Court of Appeals)?  Yes  No
18.	If your answer to 17. was "yes," attach a copy of the appeals court decision to this petition and answer the following regarding each petition, application, or motion:
	(a) Name of court
	(b) Date Filed
	(c) Result
	(d) Date of result and citation, if known
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					the NYS Court of Appeals) or the United States Supreme tition(s), application(s), or motion(s) you listed in 15. and 16.?
(a) F	First petition	Yes		No	
(b) S	Second petition	Yes		No	
(c) T	Third petition	Yes		No	
[] ist	t any other petition	n and ind	icate ve	s or no 1	
For			-	_	that court's decision to this petition and give the following
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(b) [	Date filed	O-ANGLIST ENGENHEET EN TATEGORIAN SELACO	CORONILATE DICONOMINACIONINO	ELI-COMPANIENCE MODERNICA	
(c) F	Result	сиоттенан-митотомичто.	*************	SI-SK-1900-2004-KA-NESSENINE WY NIPERSE	
(d) [	Date of result and	citation,	if know	n	
(e) L	_ist <u>all</u> grounds yo	u raised	(1) _		
(e) L	_ist <u>all</u> grounds yo	u raised	(1)	ACCUMENTATION OF THE PROPERTY	
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(	(2)(3)(4)ou did <i>not</i> appeal to				
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lf yo	(2)(3)(4)ou did not appeal to	from the	adverse	e action o	on any petition, application, or motion, explain briefly why you
lf yo	(2)(3)(4)ou did not appeal to	from the	adverse	e action o	on any petition, application, or motion, explain briefly why you
lf yo	(2)(3)(4)ou did not appeal to	from the	adverse	e action o	on any petition, application, or motion, explain briefly why you

22. State *concisely* every ground on which you claim that you are being held unlawfully. Summarize briefly the *facts* supporting each ground. If necessary, you may attach pages stating additional grounds and *facts* supporting same.

CAUTION: In order to proceed in federal court, you must ordinarily first exhaust your available state court remedies as to each ground on which you request action by the federal court. See 28 U.S.C. §2254(b). If you fail to set forth all grounds in this petition, you may be barred from presenting additional grounds at a later date. See 28 U.S.C. §2244(b).

For your information, the following is a list of the most frequently raised grounds for relief in habeas corpus proceedings. Each statement preceded by a letter constitutes a separate ground for possible relief. You may raise any grounds which you may have other than those listed if you have exhausted your state court remedies with respect to them. However, *you should raise in this petition all available grounds* (relating to this conviction) on which you base your allegations that you are being held in custody unlawfully.

Do not check any of these listed grounds. If you select one or more of these grounds for relief, you must allege facts. The petition will be returned to you if you merely check (a) through (j) or any one of these grounds.

- (a) Conviction obtained by plea of guilty which was unlawfully induced or not made voluntarily with understanding of the nature of the charge and the consequences of the plea.
- (b) Conviction obtained by use of coerced confession.
- (c) Conviction obtained by use of evidence gained pursuant to an unconstitutional search and seizure.
- (d) Conviction obtained by use of evidence obtained pursuant to an unlawful arrest.
- (e) Conviction obtained by a violation of the privilege against self-incrimination.
- (f) Conviction obtained by the unconstitutional failure of the prosecution to disclose to the defendant evidence favorable to the defendant.
- (g) Conviction obtained by a violation of the protection against double jeopardy.
- (h) Conviction obtained by action of a grand or petit jury which was unconstitutionally selected and impaneled.
- (i) Denial of effective assistance of counsel.
- (i) Denial of right of appeal.

Α.	Ground one: The court refused to instruct the pury on
	my protification defende in violation of my Due process
	Supporting FACTS (state briefly without citing cases or law): I testiloud at hind
	that my actions were born out of a sincere belief
	that I was going to be attached. I shoduced
	collower tendance so as to trigger a justification
	instrucio from te court, but the court refuged
	to do so smiply because it did not believe me.
	The court stopped me of my only deferse in
	violation of my due process rights.

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	В.	Ground two: The court's arror in parmitting the prosecution to introduce the defails of a prior conviction was not hamless.
	ecen C.	Supporting FACTS (state briefly without citing cases or law):  Pefore friel the court  ruled that he prosecution could not entroduce to details opening  frier obstray conviction in I cluste to pestity. After my testimony,  the court pennitted the prosecution to do so, which were an  error according to the my court of Appeals this error  was not hamless because it exacerbated the error  the court committed in refreshy to dange the pury of pristionation. I  sed the worst or both world's: evidence or prior bad acts to repute a prostric  Ground three:  Thruchen that I were received.  Supporting FACTS (state briefly without citing cases or law):
	D.	Ground four:
		Supporting FACTS (state briefly without citing cases or law):
23.	feder	i did not previously present any of the grounds listed in 22A, 22B, 22C, and 22D in any other court, state or al, state briefly what grounds you did not present and give your reasons for not presenting them:  States the segments on divect appeals.
	TERRORISERAL SERVICES AND CONTRACTOR	
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24.	Do you have any petition or appeal now pending in any court, either state or federal, as to the judgment under attack?
	Yes I No 🖼
	(a) Name of court
	(b) Nature of proceeding
	(c) Date filed
	(d) List <u>all</u> grounds you raised (1)
	(2)
	(3)
	(4)
25.	Give the name and address, if known, of each attorney who represented you in the following stages of the judgment you challenge in this petition:  (a) At preliminary hearing
	(b) At arraignment and plea
	(c) At trial
	(d) At sentencing
	(e) On appeal Antrow Delack, Federal Defedere on My, Tre- 52 Duane Street, 10th Floor, Ny, Ny, 10007 (f) In any post-conviction proceeding
	(g) On appeal from any adverse ruling in a post-conviction proceeding
26.	Were you sentenced on more than one count of an indictment, or on more than one indictment, in the same court and at the same time?
	Yes □ No ☑
	<del>-</del> 9 <del>-</del>

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27.	Do you have any future sentence to serve after you complete the sentence imposed by the judgment under attack?										
	attack?		No								
	(a) If so, give name and location of court which imposed sentence to be served in the future:										
	(a) is a significant of court which impoord softenior to be solved in the future.										
	(b) Give date and length of the above sentence:										
	(c) Have you filed, or do you contemplate filing, any petition attacking the judgment which imposed the sentence to be served in the future?										
	Yes		No								
Wher	efore, pe	etitione	r prays ti	t the Court grant petitioner relief to which he may be entitle	ed in this proceeding.						
	•		. ,	,							
				Signature	of Attorney (if any)						
l decla	are unde	er pena	Ity of per	y that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on							
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	Signature of Petitioner										
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The PEOPLE of the State of New York, Respondent,

Yusuf SPARKS, Defendant-Appellant.

Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department, New York. October 15, 2015 132 A.D.3d 513 2015 WL 5971671

#### Synopsis

**Background:** Defendant was convicted in a jury trial in the Supreme Court, New York County, Bonnie G. Wittner, J., of second-degree assault. Defendant appealed.

[Holding:] The Supreme Court, Appellate Division, held that trial court properly exercised its discretion in modifying its *Sandoval* ruling based on defendant's trial testimony.

Affirmed.

West Headnotes (4)

#### [1] Witnesses

Extent of showing; number of offenses

Trial court properly exercised its discretion in modifying its *Sandoval* ruling based on defendant's trial testimony in prosecution for second-degree assault; although court had originally precluded prosecutor from identifying a particular conviction as anything beyond an unspecified felony, when defendant testified, it became clear that there was a suspicious similarity, probative under the circumstances of case, between facts of defendant's prior crime and conduct he subsequently attributed to victim, and court had warned defendant, prior to opening statements, that his testimony might open the door to a modified *Sandoval* ruling.

Cases that cite this headnote

#### [2] Criminal Law

Elements and incidents of offense in general

No justification charge was warranted in prosecution for second-degree assault; there was no reasonable view of evidence, viewed in light most favorable to defendant, to support such a charge, since even under version of events contained in defendant's testimony, any conduct by victim that might have been a basis for a justification defense had abated by the time defendant committed assault.

Cases that cite this headnote

#### [3] Criminal Law

Interrogation in General

Defendant's spontaneous statements made to police were properly admitted; the statements were not the product of interrogation or its functional equivalent.

Cases that cite this headnote

#### [4] Criminal Law

Grounds in general

In light of the overwhelming evidence against defendant in prosecution for second-degree assault, any errors regarding trial court's modification of its *Sandoval* ruling, its denial of a justification charge, and its suppression ruling, were harmless.

Cases that cite this headnote

#### Attorneys and Law Firms

\*\*423 Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, New York (Andrew J. Dalack of counsel), for appellant.

Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., District Attorney, New York (Susan Gliner of counsel), for respondent.

FRIEDMAN, J.P., SWEENY, SAXE, MOSKOWITZ, GISCHE, JJ.

17 N.Y.S.3d 423, 2015 N.Y. Slip Op. 07567

#### **Opinion**

\*513 Judgment, Supreme Court, New York County (Bonnie G. Wittner, J.), rendered January 14, 2014, convicting defendant, after a jury trial, of assault in the second degree, and sentencing him, as a second violent felony offender, to a term of seven years, unanimously affirmed.

[1] The court properly exercised its discretion in modifying its Sandoval ruling based on defendant's trial testimony (see People v. Fardan, 82 N.Y.2d 638, 645–647, 607 N.Y.S.2d 220, 628 N.E.2d 41 [1993]). The court had originally precluded the prosecutor from identifying a particular conviction as anything beyond an unspecified felony. However, when defendant \*\*424 testified, it became clear that there was a suspicious similarity, probative under the circumstances of the case, between the facts of defendant's own prior crime, and the conduct he was now attributing to the victim. Furthermore, the court had warned defendant, prior to opening statements, that his testimony might open the door to a modified Sandoval ruling.

[2] The court properly denied defendant's request for a justification charge, since there was no reasonable view of the evidence, viewed in the light most favorable to defendant, to support \*514 that charge (see People v. Watts, 57 N.Y.2d 299, 301–302, 456 N.Y.S.2d 677, 442

N.E.2d 1188 [1982]). Even under the version of the events contained in defendant's testimony, any conduct by the victim that might have been a basis for a justification defense had abated by the time defendant committed the assault.

[3] The court also properly admitted defendant's spontaneous statements made to police (see People v. Rivers, 56 N.Y.2d 476, 479–480, 453 N.Y.S.2d 156, 438 N.E.2d 862 [1982] ). The record supports the court's finding that these statements were not the product of interrogation or its functional equivalent.

[4] In any event, in light of the overwhelming evidence against defendant, any errors regarding the Sandoval modification, the denial of a justification charge, and the suppression ruling were harmless (see People v. Crimmins, 36 N.Y.2d 230, 367 N.Y.S.2d 213, 326 N.E.2d 787 [1975]). The record fails to support defendant's assertion that, in determining defendant's sentence, the court improperly considered conduct for which defendant had been acquitted. We perceive no basis for reducing the sentence.

#### **All Citations**

132 A.D.3d 513, 17 N.Y.S.3d 423, 2015 N.Y. Slip Op. 07567

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The PEOPLE of the State of New York, Respondent,

V.

Yusuf SPARKS, Appellant.

Court of Appeals of New York. March 30, 2017 29 N.Y.3d 932 2017 WL 1166771

#### Synopsis

**Background:** Defendant was convicted in the Supreme Court, New York County, Bonnie G. Wittner, J., of second-degree assault. He appealed. The Supreme Court, Appellate Division, 132 A.D.3d 513, 17 N.Y.S.3d 423, affirmed. Defendant was granted leave to appeal.

[Holding:] The Court of Appeals held that jury instruction on justification defense was not warranted.

Affirmed.

West Headnotes (2)

#### [1] Assault and Battery

Self-defense

Defendant was not in danger of being physically harmed by victim at time defendant struck victim in face with a milk crate, so as to warrant instruction on justification defense in prosecution for first-degree assault; defendant, having already knocked victim out inside a store and walked away, and then returned to the store, had no need to leave the store to defend himself when he saw victim, apparently inebriated and stumbling about, outside. McKinney's Penal Law § 35.15(1).

2 Cases that cite this headnote

#### [2] Criminal Law

Witnesses

Although trial court erred in adjusting its Sandoval ruling based on defendant's

trial testimony, that error was harmless in prosecution for first-degree assault; evidence of defendant's guilt was overwhelming and there was no significant probability that outcome of the trial would have been different in absence of that error.

2 Cases that cite this headnote

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\*\*\*14 Robert S. Dean, Center for Appellate Litigation, New York City (Andrew J. Dalack of counsel), for appellant.

Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., District Attorney, New York City (Susan Gliner and Alan Gadlin of counsel), for respondent.

#### OPINION OF THE COURT

MEMORANDUM.

\*933 \*\*354 The order of the Appellate Division should be affirmed.

\*\*\*15 \*\*355 Defendant was charged with one count of assault in the first degree (Penal Law § 120.10[1]) following a dispute at a Manhattan bodega. Defendant, then age 19, and the victim, a 50-year-old man with a long history of substance abuse and criminal activity, had a verbal exchange inside the bodega after the victim provoked defendant. Based on that affront, defendant twice threatened to "murder" the victim, who was in an inebriated, stumbling state, before eventually punching him inside that store. In defendant's words, the punch "knocked [the victim] out."

The surveillance footage that was admitted into evidence at the jury trial contains images of what happened outside the bodega after defendant punched the victim. In sum, after defendant struck the victim, defendant and the victim separately left the immediate vicinity of that store on foot. A few minutes later, the footage reflects that defendant reentered the bodega; soon thereafter, the victim returned to the area immediately outside that store and stumbled about. Inside the bodega, defendant asked the shopkeeper for a stick, <sup>1</sup> but the shopkeeper refused that request,

saying that the punch was "enough for [the victim]." Defendant, however, told the shopkeeper that he \*934 was going to walk outside and "knock [the victim] out again."

The surveillance footage reflects that defendant did exactly that. As he walked out of the bodega, defendant struck the unsuspecting victim in the face with a milk crate. The blow knocked the victim to the sidewalk, and defendant walked away from that store. The victim, however, was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where he was determined to have a broken nose and cheekbone, and where he received potentially lifesaving treatment for a traumatic brain injury.

Following the trial, defendant was convicted of the lesser included offense of assault in the second degree (Penal Law § 120.05[2] ). On appeal, the Appellate Division affirmed the judgment of conviction (132 A.D.3d 513, 17 N.Y.S.3d 423 [1st Dept.2015] ). A Judge of this Court granted defendant leave to appeal (26 N.Y.3d 1092, 23 N.Y.S.3d 649, 44 N.E.3d 947 [2015] ), and we now affirm the Appellate Division order.

[1] Contrary to defendant's contention, the trial court properly refused to instruct the jury on the defense of justification. Viewing the record in the light most favorable to defendant, as we must (see People v. Watts. 57 N.Y.2d 299, 301, 456 N.Y.S.2d 677, 442 N.E.2d 1188 [1982]), we conclude there is no reasonable view of the evidence that would have permitted the factfinder to conclude that defend-ant's conduct was justified (see People v. Cox, 92 N.Y.2d 1002, 1004, 684 N.Y.S.2d 473, 707 N.E.2d 428 [1998]; cf. People v. Petty, 7 N.Y.3d 277, 284, 819 N.Y.S.2d 684, 852 N.E.2d 1155 [2006] ). That is, we agree with the People that there is no evidence that objectively supports a belief that defendant was in danger of being physically harmed by the victim at the time defendant used force against him (see Cox, 92 N.Y.2d at 1005, 684 N.Y.S.2d 473, 707 N.E.2d 428; see also People v. Wesley, 76 N.Y.2d 555, 559, 561 N.Y.S.2d 707, 563 N.E.2d 21 [1990]). 2

\*\*\*16 \*\*356 Here, after "knock[ing] [the victim] out," defendant was able to freely and safely walk away from the bodega. Moreover, \*935 there simply is no evidence that, once he returned to the bodega, defendant needed to leave that store to strike the victim to defend himself. Even if defendant's trial testimony establishes that he actually believed that the victim was lying in wait for him with a weapon (see generally Wesley, 76 N.Y.2d at 559, 561 N.Y.S.2d 707, 563 N.E.2d 21), there is no reasonable view of the evidence that "a reasonable person in ... defendant's circumstances would have believed" the victim to have threatened him with the imminent use of unlawful physical force (Umali, 10 N.Y.3d at 425, 859 N.Y.S.2d 104, 888 N.E.2d 1046; see Penal Law § 35.15[1]). Put simply, the surveillance footage reflects that defendant's ambush of the victim with the milk crate cannot be considered selfdefense.

[2] We agree with defendant that the trial court erred in adjusting its Sandoval ruling based on defendant's trial testimony (cf. People v. Fardan, 82 N.Y.2d 638, 645–647, 607 N.Y.S.2d 220, 628 N.E.2d 41 [1993] ). We further conclude, however, that the error is harmless. The evidence of defendant's guilt is overwhelming, and there is no significant probability that the outcome of the trial would have been different in the absence of that error (see generally People v. Crimmins, 36 N.Y.2d 230, 241–242, 367 N.Y.S.2d 213, 326 N.E.2d 787 [1975] ).

Chief Judge DiFIORE and Judges RIVERA, ABDUS-SALAAM, STEIN, FAHEY, GARCIA and WILSON concur.

Order affirmed, in a memorandum.

#### **All Citations**

29 N.Y.3d 932, 73 N.E.3d 354, 51 N.Y.S.3d 14, 2017 N.Y. Slip Op. 02469

#### Footnotes

- The surveillance footage also captured audio of defendant's altercations with the victim.
- 2 To be clear, the

"justification [defense] is comprised of both subjective and objective elements. The subjective element [in a case such as this one] is concerned with whether the defendant believed that the use of [physical] force was necessary; while

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under the objective prong, the jury must consider whether a reasonable person in the defendant's circumstances would have believed that [physical] force was required. When a defense of justification is raised, 'the People must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that [the] defendant's conduct was not justified' (*People v. Craig*, 78 N.Y.2d 616, 619 n. 1 [578 N.Y.S.2d 471, 585 N.E.2d 783] [1991]). In other words, the People must demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant did not believe [physical] force was necessary or that a reasonable person in the same situation would not have perceived that [physical] force was necessary (*see e.g. People v. Goetz*, 68 N.Y.2d 96, 115 [506 N.Y.S.2d 18, 497 N.E.2d 41] [1986])" (*People v. Umali*, 10 N.Y.3d 417, 425, 859 N.Y.S.2d 104, 888 N.E.2d 1046 [2008]; *see Wesley*, 76 N.Y.2d at 559, 561 N.Y.S.2d 707, 563 N.E.2d 21).

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JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET 18

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The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by taw, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

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